

THE SAVIOR'S PRECIOUS BLOOD

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A SERMON
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*"The precious blood of Christ."
1 Peter 1:19*

WE have come in our theological conversation to use that word "blood" somewhat lightly. I think it should scarcely ever be pronounced without a shudder. "The blood is the life thereof." When shed, it indicates suffering—suffering more intense than that of chastisement or bruising. Wounds are inflicted which make the lifeblood to flow out. In the case of our Lord Jesus Christ, the term "blood" brings before us all His griefs and anguish, and where the thorn crown pierced Him. Behold the man! Think of Gethsemane, where He sweat, as it were, great drops of blood falling to the ground! Think of Gabbatha, the pavement, where they scourged Him with rods, and with the scourge of the Roman lictors, where the thorn crown pierced Him. Behold the man!

Think, lastly, of Golgotha! There they pierced His hands and His feet, and at length, pierced by the spear, out of His side there came blood and water. Pass not lightly, therefore, over such a word as this—blood—the blood of Jesus Christ, God's dear Son, and when you read of its being "precious," remember that the word never had such a wealth of meaning in it before, in any of its applications.

Precious metals—gold and silver; precious stones—sardonyx, and agate, and diamond—these are but gaudy toys compared with Christ's precious blood; precious, for He is God as well as man; precious, for He is JEHOVAH'S darling—the Lamb of God, without spot or blemish; precious, when you think of God's design; precious, when you see the effects which it produces; precious, certainly, to the heart of every pardoned sinner, and precious in the song of every glorified spirit before the throne.

It is not, however, my objective this evening to pursue the sacred history, so much as to set forth the saving doctrine, while I remind you of some of the uses of this precious blood, for after all, the standard of preciousness, when we come to the very essence of it, is not scarcity, but usefulness, for there are things in this world exceedingly scarce, and therefore, precious among the sons of men, which will be left out, and treated with contempt, when we get into the land where the true standards of value are in use. That is the most precious which is the most serviceable.

So in truth the precious blood of Christ is beyond all estimation. I want to conduct you step by step through the application of this blood, and its effects upon the heart and conscience, and I shall pause at each step to ask you, dear hearer, and to ask myself this question—Do you know the blood, the precious blood, in this respect? Have you felt it in this peculiar form of its efficacy?

Beginning thus at the first—

I. THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST IS THE BLOOD OF THE ATONEMENT.

We read of the blood of the atonement under the old law. Christ, now, under the Gospel, is the propitiation for our sins. It is through the blood that God, infinitely just, without the violation of His character, can pass by the transgression of the guilty. It is not possible that any one attribute of God should ever shadow another. He is perfect. Infinitely merciful He is, but He will not be merciful at the expense of justice. Justice shall never triumph against mercy, mercy, on the other hand, shall never cut off the skirts of the flowing robe of justice.

It is in the person of Jesus, and especially in the blood of Jesus, that the great riddle of the ages is unriddled. God can be just, and yet the Justifier of him that believes in Jesus. We have sinned. God must punish sin. According to the inexorable laws which God has stamped upon the universe, the sinner

cannot go unpunished. His sin is, in fact, its own punishment, and becomes the mother of unnumbered griefs. The Mediator steps in—the Son of God and the Son of Man, eternal, and yet as man, born of Mary, and slumbering in Bethlehem's manger—He comes as the substitute for the guilty. “The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by His stripes we are healed,” and “now in Christ Jesus, we who some time were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.”

God can be gracious without the violation of the severity of His judgment. His moral government remains untarnished in all the majesty of its purity, and yet He puts out the right hand of reconciliation and love to all who approach Him, making mention of the blood of the atonement of His dear Son.

Are you, then, thus reconciled to God by the death of His Son, or are you an enemy still? Have you ever seen the distance between you and God bridged by the cross? Have you seen at once how God, the infinitely just, can commune with you without consuming you, because He poured His wrath upon Christ, instead of you, and then, accepted in Him and for His merits, you live because Jesus lives!

Ah! dear hearer, if you have not seen this, may the Lord open those blind eyes of yours, and by His eternal Spirit bring you, with your burden of sin upon your back, to the foot of the Master's cross, where you may look up and sing—

*“Oh! how sweet to view the flowing
Of His sin-atonement blood;
With divine assurance knowing,
That it made my peace with God.”*

The blood of Jesus Christ has another effect upon us, namely, that—

II. IT CLEANSSES FROM SIN.

Surely we can never fail to remember that choicest of all Scriptural texts, “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” There is such music in it that when the spirits before the throne desire to have a song of which they might never grow weary, they selected that sentiment, and they sing before the throne that they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Their purity before God is due to the fountain filled with blood, wherein their stained garments, all soiled with sin, have been made clean.

When the soul comes to Jesus Christ by faith, and relies upon Him, then the sentence of the perfect pardon goes forth from God, and the soul is purged from all the stains of accumulated years. In a single moment those who were black as hell become white as heaven, through the application of the blood of sprinkling, for all sin disappears as soon as the blood falls on the conscience. That which the blood of bulls and of goats could not do, the blood of Jesus effectually accomplishes—cleansing from all sin.

Now, dear hearer, have you ever been thus cleansed? Say not you had never need of cleansing, else you know not your natural condition, and your actual transgressions. Man! you can never have seen yourself in the glass of the Word, else you would perceive yourself to be totally defiled and altogether as an unclean thing. You would have bowed yourself before the Lord, and joined in the confession, “We have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep; we have done those things which we ought not to have done, and we have left undone those things which we ought to have done; and there is no health in us.”

Well, if you have ever thus felt your guilt, have you ever realized your pardon? If not, give yourself no sleep till you have. Can you bear to live unpardoned, or in doubt whether or not God has absolved you? Can you ever take any kind of rest, much less indulge your soul with mirth, until the word “Absolvo” has come from God Himself, the eternal Spirit bearing witness with your spirit that you are born of God? Happy are they who have been washed, they have need to come each night (even as Peter the apostle had need) to wash their feet, but they need not except to wash their feet, for they are clean every whit. Jesus has made them clean through His blood.

The third step is that—

III. THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST IS THE GREAT PRICE OF OUR REDEMPTION.

Redemption sometimes in Scripture is spoken of as being the same thing as pardon, and I shall not at all dogmatically attempt tonight to draw any nice distinction between the two. "We have redemption through his blood—to wit, the forgiveness of sin—according to the riches of his grace." But redemption seems rather to be in some sense the effect produced by a pardon than the actual pardon itself. Man is a slave. As long as guilt is written in God's book against us, we are in bondage. We feel for the present that we are slaves to sin, and that for the future the punishment of sin will inevitably come upon us to our eternal destruction.

But the moment we are purged from the guilt of sin we are set free from the slavery of it, Jesus Christ takes us from being slaves, and makes us to be children, gives us no longer "the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father!" He was slain and He has redeemed us unto God by His blood, and in the liberty wherewith Christ makes us free we rejoice to see that it was the blood which was the price thereof, and because He suffered, therefore our chains have dropped off from us. We are free—the Lord's freemen, free henceforth to serve Him with renewed love and renewed hearts, because of the abundance of the grace which He has manifested towards us.

Now, beloved, have you ever been redeemed by the blood of Jesus? I am not talking to you now about a redemption effected upon the cross, but have you ever felt redemption in your own spirit from the curse of the law, from the thralldom of a guilty conscience, and from the power of sin? Let me ask you, are you the Lord's freeman tonight? Oh! happy are you then, for you can say, "Lord, thou hast loosed my bonds, and, therefore, I am thy servant." "We are not our own, because we are bought with a price," and inasmuch as we are no more slaves to the law from henceforth, for the love we bear His name who has redeemed us with such a price, we reckon ourselves to be His servants, and we bear in our body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

Ah! friends, if you were never redeemed by the precious blood, then you are slaves still—slaves to sin and Satan, slaves under the vengeance of God, and slaves to the law. But may you never be content in slavery! May you pine after freedom, and may Jesus give it to you—give it to you tonight, if it be His blessed will!

In the fourth place, the blood of Jesus is spoken of in Scripture as—

IV. INTERCEDING.

"The blood of sprinkling speaks better things than that of Abel." It is said to be sprinkled within the veil, so that where the high priest could only go once a year we may now go at all times, for the blood is there, interceding for us perpetually. Well, in fact, says one of our poets—

*"The wounds of Christ for us
Incessantly do plead."*

Even after His death, remember, His heart for us poured out its flood. After death that heart was pierced, and blood and water came. So, after His voice was silent, and He could no longer say, "Father, forgive them," the wounds were still eloquent, and even when the suffering passed they continued still to plead with God.

Now, soul, have you ever come to God through the intercession of the blood? You have said prayers, you have repeated forms of devotion, you have gone to church or to meeting house. This is all well enough, but have you gone farther? for if not, all outward forms of devotion are but frivolous puerilities that may allure, but will deceive you.

Did you ever come to God by the blood, and did you ever by faith fix your eye upon "the High Priest who ever liveth to make intercession for us," who, with our names upon His bosom, offering still the blood, stands at this moment before the Father, God, pleading for us who love Him and trust Him? Happy they who look to the interceding Savior, and who feel that His blood speaks, not revenge, but cries at every vein, "Mercy, mercy for the chief of sinners!"

This leads me to remark that the blood of Jesus—

V. BECOMES THE MODE AND WAY OF ACCESS TO GOD.

We have boldness to enter into the holiest through the blood of Christ. After first cleansing the man, and making him fit to come as a priest and a king unto God, then the blood, as it were, takes away the veil, and opens up the pathway to God Himself for the forgiven and redeemed soul. Never let us attempt to come to God by anything but the blood. All other ways to God, except through the blood of Jesus, are presumptuous. All other fire that we may put upon the altar, except this, is strange fire, and the Lord's anger will go forth against us. May I never plead when on my knees before God anything but the precious merits and the dear wounds of the Man of Sorrows who is now exalted at the right hand of God.

How close to God we should come if we did but always bring Christ with us, but what are our prayers when we leave Him behind? What are our devotions when we are met together, or when we are in secret, and we go to the mercy seat, but forget the blood that was sprinkled on it, oblivious of the new and living way through the rent body of Immanuel?

Come, brethren and sisters, let us chide ourselves for having forgotten our Lord sometimes, and henceforth be it ours never to think of drawing near to God, except by this way of access—the crimson road which the blood has paved for us.

To advance farther, the blood of Jesus Christ, according to the Word, is—

VI. SANCTIFYING.

Jesus sanctified His people by His own blood, and therefore, suffered without the gate. By sanctification is usually meant in Scripture the setting apart of anything for the service of God, and so making it holy. Now, the blood separates the saints from all others. It was the blood that was the distinguishing mark of Israel in Egypt. Every Egyptian house was without the blood, but every house of the seed of Abraham had the blood mark upon the lintel and the two side posts, and when God saw the blood He passed over them, and spared them in the night of His furious anger.

The blood, then, beloved, if you have ever had it on your soul, is to be the distinguishing mark between you and the ungodly in the day of wrath, and it should distinguish you now. You should, by your life and your conversation, make yourself to appear to be as the blood has made you really to be—a separated one. We are not of the world, even as Christ is not of the world. We have heard the mandate—"Come ye out from among them; be ye separate; touch not the unclean thing." We have left the world's sin, and we have left the world's religion too.

We have separated ourselves at once from the world's goodness, as well as from the world's vileness, to walk in the path of nonconformity to the world, that we may tread in the footsteps of our crucified Redeemer, and the more the blood is applied, the more the obedience of Jesus is trusted in, and the sprinkling of the blood is relied upon, the more shall we become sanctified in spirit, and soul, and body, by the power of the Holy Ghost. Let us never forget the purifying power of Jesus in the heart.

Wherever He is trusted to take away the guilt of sin, we must seek next the water which flowed with the blood to take away the power of sin, and we must ask to see Him sit as a refiner to purify, yea, it must be our prayer that He would take His fan in His hand and purge our hearts as He does His floor.

Refining fire, go through my soul! Oh! sweet love of Jesus, burn up the love of the world! Oh! death of Jesus, be the death of sin. Oh! life of Christ, be the life of everything that is gracious, God-like, heavenly, eternal! So shall it be in proportion as we partake of the power and the efficacy of that blood.

The blood, furthermore, is—

VII. CONFIRMATORY.

We must not forget this one effect of it. It is called the blood of the covenant—the blood of the testament—the blood of the New Testament. The covenant was not in force in the olden times until there had been a sacrifice to confirm it, and a will stands not until the death of the testator has been proved to make it valid. The heart's blood of Jesus is, as it were, the establishment of His last will and testament. Jesus, the great Testator, has died, has made an end of sin, and His blood is the great seal of His testament, and makes it valid to us.

If He had never died! Oh! dreadful “if,” only equaled in horror by that other “if”—if He had never risen again from the dead! But now is Christ risen from the dead. Now has Christ slept, and awoke as the first fruits of them that slept. Never doubt the promise of God, for the blood confirms it. Never doubt the love of God, for He spared not His own Son, but freely delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? If you want evidence as to the eternal goodness of God, His willingness to pardon, His power to save and to bless, look to the cross of Calvary, and see the bleeding Savior, and never doubt again.

Dear hearer, did the blood so come to you as to confirm your hope, or is your hope a fancy, a delusion? Do you think it needs no confirmation? Have you ever in your moments of questioning and anxiety gone over again to the altar where is the Great Victim? Have you said once more—

*“Just as I am, without one plea
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee.
Oh! Lamb of God, I come!”*

Have you, then, got your consolation back? Have you received the witness of God? Have you heard the voice which bears witness both in heaven and earth, the voice of the Spirit, and the water and the blood, and have you been satisfied because you wanted no better confirmation than the witness of the blood of Jesus applied with power to your soul?

The blood of Jesus has another effect of which we ought to think more than we do—that of—

VIII. NOURISHING, CHEERING, AND SUSTAINING THE BELIEVER.

To this end the ordinance of communion with Christ in the breaking of bread, and partaking of the cup of blessing has been instituted. When we come to the Lord's table we have set before us in the broken bread whereof we eat, and in the wine whereof we drink, this present fact, that the sufferings of our Master are now at this moment for our nourishment, sustenance, consolation, and exhilaration.

We have been washed in the blood, we are now to receive, after a spiritual sort, the precious blood of Jesus to nourish our faith, to comfort our hope, to excite in us the liveliest joy, and to make us sing and be merry with holy confidence in Him who has redeemed us from all iniquity, and made us unto God priests and kings to reign with Christ forever and ever.

There is no cordial for the heart like the blood of Jesus. To think of the atoning sacrifice is the readiest way to consolation. Our sorrows are not worth a thought when once compared with His. Sit down under the shadow of the cross, and you will find a cooler shade than that of a great rock in a weary land. There is no pasturage for the sheep of Christ like that which grows on Calvary.

There is nowhere to be found such wine that makes glad the heart of God and man, as that which comes from the sacred cup of His heart, whereof believers drink by faith when they have fellowship with Him, and come into near and dear communion with Him. Although we do sometimes enjoy this without any emblems, without the bread, and without the wine, still these are great assistants, blessed exponents, and they graciously help our forgetfulness. We are yet in the body, and we need something that shall aid this lagging flesh to see something of the Lord.

Oh! feed you, then, on Christ, and do not be content unless day by day He is your daily bread. He who has given you life must sustain that life. He who has taught you how to rejoice must still supply you with power to continue in your daily rejoicing. The blood without cleanses, the blood within cheers, yea, sacredly inebriates the soul, till the sinner drinks and forgets his sorrow, and remembers his misery no more, and in the fullness of his delight he becomes sweetly oblivious, whether in the body or out of the body, as he rises into almost celestial communion with his unseen, but ever present Lord.

Once again, the blood of Jesus Christ has the effect of—

IX. UNITING CHRISTIANS TOGETHER.

Paul, speaking of Jew and Gentile, says that He “has made both one through the blood of Christ,” and surely there is nothing that unites different denominations of Christians together like the precious blood of Jesus. Brethren, we may dispute, I think we do well to dispute, over important ordinances and doctrines, for wherein men err we are not to wink at their errors, and neither ask them to wink at ours.

I have sometimes heard it said, “Spare such a brother.” Yes, as a brother, but who am I that I should be spared if I err, or who is he that he should be spared? What are we, or what are our feelings compared with the truth? Nay, let questions be fought out as kindly, as lovingly, as valorously, as honorably as they possibly can be. Truth fears not the shock of arms.

Let the controversies go on. I believe that, after all, there is more truth in this world now with all the apparent divisions of Christians by ten times than there would have been if we had been united in a nominal union into some one great church, which might, perhaps, have rotted as thoroughly as the old Church of Rome did before the days of Luther.

But when we come to the cross foot, what union there is! If the saints in prayer appear as one, if in the praise of the infinite JEHOVAH they are one, much more, and much more tenderly, are they one when they behold Jesus bleeding and dying for them. My heart melts and breaks when I hear Christ preached. He who lifted up Christ would have offended me had he preached some other part of his creed. Had he talked over some doctrine which I hold to be erroneous, he and I had differed, but when it comes to this, “HE loved me and gave Himself for me—He is the chiefest among ten thousand, the altogether lovely—His blood is precious”—I feel inclined to cry, “Brother, keep to that, praise Him louder, give Him all the honor—

*“Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown Him Lord of all.”*

While we keep to that we are none of us heretics over that. There shall be no schisms and divisions over the matter. Son of God and Son of Man, Redeemer of our souls from death and misery, all Your mother's children praise You. Every sheaf bows before Your sheaf, sun, and moon, and every star do obeisance unto You, King of kings, and Lord of lords, Head over all things unto your church, which is Your dwelling place, the fullness of Him that fills all in all!

Since here we are one, when we get together as believers I wish we oftener struck that key—the precious blood of Christ—and in our walks and talks with those Christians who differ from us in many points let us try sometimes to turn those points aside, and say, “We do agree to speak well of that dear name which is above every name, that name which charms all our fears, and bids all our sorrows cease, that name which is the joy of the believer on earth and the bliss of the saints in heaven.

I close now when I have noticed that the blood of Jesus Christ may be looked upon by us every day as—

X. THE GREAT INSTRUCTOR AND THE CARDINAL WITNESS OF DIVINE TRUTH.

God is to be seen in nature, and seen vividly there, but not as He is to be seen in Christ Jesus. Instruction as to the eternal power of the Godhead some find in the skies above, in the fields around, and in the sea beneath, but in the cross, there is more of God than in all the world besides. I have often felt, when I have been rambling in the Alps, that nature was too small to set forth God. The mirror is not large enough to reflect the face of the Eternal.

You stand in the Alps and hear the avalanche, like claps and peals of thunder resounding in the air, you gaze afar off, and there it is, and it looks to you like the falling of a few grains of snow. It is so inconsiderable that the grandeur seems to be destroyed. Though every one of those granules may be a block of ice weighing a hundred tons, at such a distance the thing grows small.

The water leaps down hundreds of feet from the crags, but up in the mountains it appears to be a little trickling rill scarcely worth notice. The very Alpine summits seem to dwindle down to small heaps of stones when one grows used to the scenery. God is too great for this earth to bear Him. The axles of this world's chariot would snap beneath the weight of deity.

We talk of going from nature up to nature's God, but the top of the highest Alps is far below His footstool. We do not get any conceptions of God out of nature worthy of His august majesty. But in contemplating the cross, in discerning there how God can forgive, how willing He is to save the guilty, how His justice is magnified at the same time as His grace, I am persuaded that those who have tried both forms of contemplation will tell you that this last is the better by far. You see God through the wounds of Christ as through windows of agate, and gates of carbuncle, and you cry, "My Lord, and my God!"

In winding up this poor discourse of mine, let me say to you, beloved, be more in meditation upon Jesus. I say to myself—Preacher, preach your Master more, preach Him more after His own sort, and endeavor to be yourself more like Him. Dear hearer, live nearer to the cross. With all your study of doctrine—and you do well to study it thoroughly—make Jesus Christ the first. Believe in Him. Let Him be your creed. Speak of a body of divinity—there never was in this world but one body of divinity, and that is Jesus Christ, and he that understands Jesus Christ has got the only system of theology that is worth knowing. Get right into Him.

Some of the early Fathers used to study every wound. They would write a treatise almost on every different spot where He was scourged. They had some tears to let fall and some sweet songs to sing for every step along the *Via Dolorosa*. Let us not treat lightly what those nearer to the light treated so solemnly, but regarding the Master, and thinking much of even the littles that concern Him (for the leaves of this tree of life are for the healing of the nations), let us study to understand Him, and ask to be conformed to Him, even in His sufferings to be like Him, and when we suffer to see Him in our pangs. Let every grief be a glass through which to look into His life and love and understand His grace.

I wish you all knew this, and more than this. Oh! that I could hope that all this assembled company did trust in my Master! Poor sinner, why not trust Him? You will never be saved else. There is no other door of mercy for you than that. Come, come, come, even though you think He will cast you away. If Christ had a drawn sword in His hand, yet I would bid you come. It were better to fall on the point of His sword than to live without Him.

Come and rest upon Him. He never did reject a sinner yet, and He never can. The vilest of the vile can find mercy in Him, and all He asks—and that He gives—is that you do rely on Him with all your heart, and you shall be saved. God grant that you may, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

Obey the second precept as you have attained to the first. When you have believed in Christ crucified, dead, and buried for you, then be dead and buried with Him in baptism. Take the outward symbol of His death, burial, and resurrection, and ask to have the inward spiritual grace, that you, being dead to the world, and dead with Christ, and buried with Him, may rise again to newness of life through His quickening Spirit.

The Lord thus bless you, for Jesus' sake!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

1 PETER 1:1-16, MATTHEW 10:37-40

1 Peter Chapter 1. Verses 1-2. *Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.*

The first Christians were not so afraid of the doctrine of election as some are nowadays. Peter was not ashamed to address the saints as the elect of God, for so, indeed, they are, if they are saints at all. It is He that chose them, not because they were sanctified, but that they might be sanctified—chose them to eternal life through sanctification. Oh! happy are they who by grace have made their calling and

election sure, and now ascribe all the glory of their salvation to the sovereign choice of God. "Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied."

3-5. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*

How full of grace every sentence is. He blesses God because God has so freely blessed us, and he abounds in thanksgiving because he sees that abundant mercy by which believers have been begotten again—born again—made, therefore, children after a new sort, and so made heirs of an inheritance very different from that upon which we enter by nature "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

Brethren and sisters, if you have, indeed, been born by divine grace, to what estates are you born—to what high dignities and sacred privileges! Rejoice and bless the Lord. But perhaps, the dark fear crossed your mind that, perhaps, after all, you may perish and miss the inheritance. Now, notice the double consolation of a double keeping. The inheritance is kept. It is reserved in heaven for you, and you are kept too. It is kept for you, and you are kept for it, "For you, who are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation."

6. *Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:*

This is your life. This is like a rainbow made up of the drops of earth's sorrow in the beams of heaven's love—a happy combination, after all.

7. *That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:*

Gilt looks very much like gold but it will not stand the fire. It curls and disappears. Oh! to be solid gold through and through. If so, you need not mind the trials of today, since they will only prepare you for the glories eternal at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

8-10. *Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you:*

Prophets knew about you. They did not taste of the grace you know, but through the vista of the future they foresaw it, and they almost envied you in this Gospel dispensation that you should live in so clear a light, and should be fed upon such rare mercies. Oh! what prophets and kings longed for, do not let us despise, and we shall despise these mercies if we do not make the most of them by entering into the fullness of the joy which they are meant to bring to us. These prophets searched diligently.

11-12. *Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.*

See you not your privilege, then? You have what prophets had not. You enjoy what angels desire to see. They cannot enjoy what you do. Rightly does our hymn put it—

*"Never did angels taste above
Redeeming grace and dying love."*

And you have, this very day.

13. *Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind,—*

Be ready to depart to your inheritance. Do not let your garments flow carelessly and loosely, as though you had no journey before you, but “gird up the loins of your mind.”

13. *Be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;*

That is a very blessed subject. There is a grace that was brought to you when Christ first came. There is another grace and a higher grace that is to be brought to you when Christ shall come the second time. Until that second coming of Christ, the church on earth and in heaven cannot be perfected. The bodies of the saints wait in the grave till He comes to give them resurrection.

*“O long expected day, begin!
Dawn on these realms of woe and sin.”*

For we wait for Your appearing, O Christ.

14-16. *As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.*

See your model. See the copy to which you are to write. You are far short of it. Try again. May the power of Jesus rest upon you, and may He that has wrought us to the selfsame thing to which we have attained continue to work in us till we are like our Lord Himself!

Matthew Chapter 10. Verse 37. *He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.*

What a wonderful sight, then, the church is as it passes through this world. The head of it is Christ, the cross bearer, and following in the train, are all His faithful disciples, all carrying crosses still—the very picture of a church. You know how Simon carried the cross after Christ, he is the type of all His disciples.

*“Did Simon bear the cross alone,
And all the rest go free?
No, there’s a cross for everyone,
And there’s a cross for me.”*

38-39. *And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.*

You gain life by dying for Christ, but if you saved life by denying the faith, you would in the worst sense lose all that makes existence to be life. There is an existence which is nothing but eternal death, and this is the doom of those who depart from Christ. But blessed are they who can give up this temporary mortal life for the sake of an eternal one.

I have heard of one who used often to boast of what he would do if it came to his being burnt, but just before the day on which he was to be burnt alive for the faith, he recanted. He was allowed to go home. In a few months it happened that he was burnt alive in his house. Unhappy man that could not burn for Christ, but had to burn after all. “He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.”

40. *He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receives him that sent me.*

Think of that, you that have received Christ. You have received God Himself, and He has come to dwell and reign with your soul.

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